



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

[Doc. No. AMS-FV-11-0084]

Specialty Crop Block Grant Program – Farm Bill Request for Extension and Revision of a Currently Approved Information Collection

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35), this document announces the Agricultural Marketing Service's (AMS) intention to request approval, from the Office of Management and Budget, for an extension of and revision to the currently approved information collection under the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program-Farm Bill (SCBGP-FB).

DATES: Comments on this document must be received by [Insert date 60 days after publication in the Federal Register] to be assured of consideration.

ADDRESSES: Interested persons are invited to submit comments concerning this information collection document. Comments should be submitted online at www.regulations.gov or sent to Docket Clerk, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Stop 0235, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20250-0243; or by facsimile to (202) 720-0016. All comments should reference the docket number (AMS-FV-11-0084), the date, and the page number of this issue of the **Federal Register**. All comments received will be posted without change, including any personal information provided, online at <http://www.regulations.gov> and will be made available for public inspection at the above

physical address during regular business hours.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Trista Etzig at the above physical address, by telephone (202) 690-4942, or by email at [mailto: scblockgrants@usda.gov](mailto:scblockgrants@usda.gov).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Specialty Crop Block Grant Program – Farm Bill.

OMB Number: 0581-0248.

Expiration Date of Approval: 3 years from date of OMB approval.

Type of Request: Extension and revision of a currently approved information collection.

Abstract: The information collection requirements in this request are applied only to those State departments of agriculture who voluntarily participate in the SCBGP-FB. The information collected is needed to certify that grant participants are complying with applicable program regulations. Data collected is the minimum information necessary to effectively carry out the requirements of the program, and to fulfill the intent of section 101 of the Competitiveness Act of 2004, as amended by section 10109 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, (2008 Farm Bill) (Pub. L. 110-246).

State departments of agriculture who wish to participate in the SCBGP-FB would have to submit the following:

(a) SF-424, “Application for Federal Assistance,” (approved under OMB collection number 4040-0004) is required to apply for federal assistance.

(b) SF-424A, “Budget Information-Non-Construction Programs,” (approved under OMB collection number 0348-0044) is required to show each project’s budget breakdown.

(c) Form SF-424B, “Assurances-Non-Construction Programs,” (approved under OMB collection number 0348-0040) to assure the Federal government of the applicant’s legal authority to apply for Federal assistance.

(d) State Plan Narrative. Completed applications must include a State Plan Narrative to show how grant funds will be utilized to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 10 hours per response.

Respondents: State departments of agriculture.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 56 (All 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands).

Estimated Number of Responses: 56.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 1.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 560 hours.

Before funds are dispersed, State departments of agriculture must complete the following forms:

(a) Grant Agreement. The Grant Agreement sets forth the agreed upon responsibilities of AMS project work. It also indicates the agreed upon grant funding dollar amounts and the beginning date and ending date of the project work and the Grant Agreement. One copy of this Grant Agreement is required to be returned to AMS with the grantee’s signatures and dated for each grant.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 2 hours per response.

Respondents: State departments of agriculture.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 56.

Estimated Number of Responses: 56.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 1.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 112 hours.

(b) Form SF-270, “Request for Advance and Reimbursement” (approved under OMB collection number 0348-0004) is required whenever the grantees request an advance or reimbursement of Federal grant funds. AMS expects that at least three (3) SF-270 forms will be submitted during the grant agreement period.

(c) Annual Performance Report. The Annual Performance Report is required if a grant period is more than one year in length. The Annual Performance Report is written documentation required to notify AMS about the work activities and progress towards completing the grantee’s and subgrantee’s established project activities, goals and outcomes. AMS expects that at least two (2) Annual Performance Reports will be submitted during the grant agreement period.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 3 hours per response.

Respondents: State departments of agriculture.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 56.

Estimated Number of Responses: 112.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 2.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 336 hours.

(d) Final Performance Report. The Final Performance Report is written information required by AMS within 90 days after the ending date of the Grant Agreement. This information is utilized as final documentation of completion of the project activities, goals and outcomes.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 6 hours per response.

Respondents: State departments of agriculture.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 56.

Estimated Number of Responses: 56.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 1.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 336 hours.

(e) Request for Grant Amendment. A State department of agriculture participating in the SCBGP-FB would have to submit a Request for Grant Amendment to AMS if there is a change in key personnel, scope or objectives of the grant, budget changes that exceed more than 20% of a project's total budget, and/or or an extension of the grant period not to exceed three calendar years.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response.

Respondents: State departments of agriculture.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 56.

Estimated Number of Responses: 56.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 2.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 112 hours.

(f) SF-425 “Federal Financial Report (approved under OMB collection number 0348-0061) is to be completed 90 days after the expiration date of the grant period to comply with various legal and regulatory requirements as described within the form.

(g) Audit Report. A State is required to conduct an audit of SCBGP-FB expenditures and an audit report is required to be submitted to AMS no later than 30 days after completion of the audit.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 3 hours per response.

Respondents: State departments of agriculture.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 56.

Estimated Number of Responses: 56.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 1.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 168 hours.

Finally, State departments of agriculture are required to retain records pertaining to the SCBGP-FB for 3 years after completion of the grant period or until final resolution of any audit findings or litigation claims relating to the SCBGP-FB. This is a part of normal business practice.

This program would not be maintained by any other agency, therefore, the requested information will not be available from any other existing records.

AMS is committed to compliance with the Government Paperwork Elimination Act (GPEA) (44 USC 3540 note), which requires Government agencies in general to provide the public the option of submitting information or transacting business electronically to the maximum extent possible. The SF-424, SF-424A, and SF-424B forms and State Plan

(Narrative) can be completed electronically and are required to be submitted electronically through www.grants.gov.

The SF-425 and SF-270 forms can be filled out electronically and submitted electronically.

The Annual Performance Report, Final Performance Report, Audit Report, and Request for Grant Amendment can be submitted electronically. The Grant Agreement requires an original signature and can be submitted by mail.

Comments are invited on: (1) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

All responses to this document will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will become a matter of public record.

Dated: December 22, 2011

David R. Shipman
Acting Administrator

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